



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

# SHOULD IMMIGRATION BE RESTRICTED?

BY SIMON GREENLEAF CROSWELL.

---

DURING recent years there has been a growing interest in devising some plan for checking or limiting the tide of immigration whose waves sweep in upon the United States almost daily in constantly increasing volume. The subject has been discussed in legislatures, in political meetings, from pulpits, in reform clubs, and among individuals on every hand. The reason for the interest which the subject now excites is easily found in the recent enormous increase of immigration.

Much as the subject has been discussed, however, and many as have been the arguments which have been brought forward on one side or the other, there has been a noticeable lack of the one element which can give certainty to the arguments and force to the conclusions. Inferences, deductions, conjectures, and a host of less persuasive probabilities have been brought forward and paraded in each line of battle; but of facts, such facts, I mean, as bear directly and strongly upon the problems involved, there has been little use made. The purpose of this article is to set forth clearly and prominently these facts, to investigate them, and see to what conclusions they point.

The problem divides itself at the outset into two distinct questions: First, is it for the advantage of the United States that immigration be checked or limited? Second, if so, in what way should the check or limit be applied?

It will not do to trust to the answers to these questions given by local interests or party prejudices. If these interests and prejudices were to be consulted, we should hear in answer to the first question, a loud and emphatic "yes" from the Eastern seaboard, and from the great centers of population on the east slope of the Alleghanies. In these Eastern cities, where the already

crowded mechanic and artisan and laborer view in each new arrival a possible competitor and rival, local feeling would be strongly in favor of a limitation of the immigration. On the other hand, from the central States in the Mississippi Valley, where the existing population has not risen to so high a percentage, compared with the supporting powers of the land, and where the demand for unskilled labor which the immigrants are qualified to perform is still in excess of the supply, the answer would not be so distinct and emphatic. There would be good reasons advanced by one party why immigration should be encouraged, rather than checked, while another party would assert that there were already too many immigrants and that some limit must be fixed. Going still further West, where the average percentage of population to the area of the land dwindles in some localities almost to the vanishing point, we should hear from the isolated inhabitants who are wrestling with nature on their scattered farms and ranches, a cry for laborers, as distinct and emphatic, if not uttered by so great numbers, as the opposing cry in the East.

Furthermore, it is evident that the same questions cover two distinct fields of inquiry, the first political and the second industrial. Nor can the two fields be examined simultaneously, for the reasons, if there are any, from a political point of view, why immigration should be limited, would not apply to the question viewed on its industrial side, and *vice versa*.

Taking up first the industrial question, we may assume that the entrance of the swarms of immigrants into our country represents the introduction of just so much laboring power into the country, and we may also assume as a self-evident proposition that the introduction of laboring power into an undeveloped or partially developed country is advantageous until the point is reached at which all the laborers whom the country can support have been introduced. Adam Smith says that labor is the wealth of nations. If this is true, the laborer is the direct and only primary means of acquiring wealth. The facts of the history of our country bear out this view. Beginning with the clearing of the forests, the settlement of the villages, the cultivation of farms, proceeding to the establishment of the lumber industries, the cultivation of vast wheat and corn fields, the production of cotton, the working of the coal and oil fields of Pennsylvania, the development of the

mining districts of the West, culminating in the varied and extensive manufactures of the Eastern and Central States, the laborer has been the Midas whose touch has turned all things to gold.

There is, however, a limitation to the principle that the introduction of laborers into a partially developed country is advantageous. A point is finally reached which may be called the saturation point of the country ; that is, it has as many inhabitants as it can supply with reasonably good food and clothing. This saturation point may be reached many times in the history of a country, for the ratio between the food and clothing products and the population is constantly varying. New modes of cultivation, and the use of machinery, as well as natural causes affecting the fertility of land, which are as yet obscure, render a country at one time capable of supporting a much larger number of inhabitants than at another time. Still, there is a broad and general truth that, time and place and kind of people being considered, some countries are over-populated, and some are under-populated.

We are accustomed to say that some of the countries of Europe are over-populated, and there are among us some who are beginning to say that the United States have reached the same point. This is far from being the case, and a single glance at the comparative average density of population of the principal European nations and of the United States will be sufficient to drive this idea out of any fair minded person's head.

The most thickly settled country of modern Europe is the Netherlands, which had, in the year 1890, the very large average of 359 inhabitants per square mile of territory. Great Britain came next with the almost equally large average of 311 inhabitants per square mile of territory. Germany had 234 and France 187. Taking in for purposes of comparison, though not of much force in the argument, China, we find there an average population of 295 inhabitants per square mile of territory. It is a question of some difficulty to decide in any specific case whether a country has reached the point of over-population. We may admit that Great Britain, with its average of 311 inhabitants per mile, is over-populated, though the conditions of life do not seem to be wholly intolerable, even to the lowest classes there. If Great Britain is over-populated, *a fortiori* are the Netherlands,

and we may even go so far as to admit that Germany, with its average of 234 inhabitants per square mile, is over-populated. But when we come to France, with its 187 inhabitants per square mile, we may pause and see what are the conditions of the French people. So far as it is possible to judge of a people in the lump, it would seem that the population of France is not excessive for the area. The land holdings are divided up into very small lots, but are held by a great number of people. Mackenzie, in his history of the nineteenth century, says that nearly two-thirds of the French householders are landowners, while only one British householder in every four is an owner of land. This condition results partly from the difference in the system of inheritance of land in the two countries, but would be impossible if the country were over-populated. Moreover, there are five millions of people in France whose possessions in land are under six acres each.

Taking, then, the population of France, averaging 187 per square mile, as being at least not above the normal rate of population, what do we find in comparing it with the population of the United States? We find over here vast tracts of country, amounting to nearly one-third by actual measurement, of the whole area of the United States, and including all the States west of the Missouri and Mississippi valleys (except a portion of California), having a population of less than six individuals per square mile. It would seem as if the mere statement of this fact were alone sufficient to disprove any proposition which asserts that the saturation point of population has been reached in the United States. While that immense expanse of country averages only 6 individuals to the square mile, there can be no reason for saying that this country is over-populated. Coming now to the more thickly settled portions of the United States, we find a large area spread out over various parts of the States having a population of between seven and forty-five individuals per square mile. In a very few States, New York, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana, the population of the whole State averages over forty-five and under ninety individuals per square mile, and the same average holds in parts of Massachusetts, Connecticut, Illinois, Kentucky, and isolated spots in the South. In a small territory, made up of parts of Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey, the population averages over ninety per square mile.

The contrast between these averages of population in various portions of the United States, the highest of which is about ninety individuals per mile (and that over very small portions of the area of the United States) and the average densities of the European countries, previously examined, shows how very far the United States still is from complete population. This appears still more clearly when the average population of the United States, taken as a whole, is considered, which is the extraordinarily low figure of twenty individuals per square mile of territory. What a striking contrast! Can the most ardent advocate of the Malthusian doctrine claim that the United States already has too many inhabitants, or is in danger of having too many in the immediate future? Do we not rather need to encourage immigration, to fling wide open the gates of our country and secure as large an addition to our working force as possible?

There is, however, a limit to immigration which should be invariably applied. The reason why the encouragement of immigration is desirable from an industrial point of view is simply that it furnishes more laborers. Necessarily, therefore, those who are unable or unwilling to work should be excluded.

When we come to the political aspect of the problem, however, a wholly different series of considerations present themselves. The question now is not how many citizens, but what sort of citizens. The theory of our government is not limited to any number of people. It provides for expansion in the number of representatives in Congress in proportion to the increase in population, and increases the number of Senators as new States are formed and added to the Union. Similarly each State government has elastic provisions which enable it to cover a population of 400,000 as well as a population of 40,000. But the one critical test in determining whether or not our immigration should be limited for political reasons is the character of the people whom we are admitting to the privilege of citizenship in the United States.

In order to investigate successfully the political effect of the immigration, it is necessary, at the outset, to divide it into its constituent nationalities, so that taking up each nationality in turn, we may see what fitness it has from its previous political training in its native country for undertaking the duties of American citizenship. The disintegration of the tide of immi-

gration into these constituent parts affords some interesting information which will be seen to have a bearing, in several directions, on the questions under consideration in this article. Taking the statistics of the year 1891 as a typical year of recent immigration, the tide of immigration amounted in round numbers to 500,000 individuals.

The largest feeder of this enormous stream came from Germany, which sent, roughly speaking, 100,000. But a noticeable point about this nationality is the great decrease in the number of immigrants it has sent us in the last fifteen years. In the year 1882 the total German immigration into the United States amounted to no less than 250,000, but in 1883 and 1884 there was a great decrease, and since then the average has remained in the neighborhood of 100,000. We shall see later that on the other hand, the immigration from the Latin and Slav nations of Europe, particularly Italy, Poland, and Austria, shows an enormous rate of increase in the same period, although, of course, the absolute amounts are much less than those of the German immigration.

The next largest feeder to our stream of immigration in the year 1891, the typical year of our examination, was Italy, which contributed 76,000 immigrants to our population. It is noteworthy to remark, in this connection, that Italy has more than doubled her annual rate of contributions to our people in the ten years under consideration, the immigration from her shores in 1882 being only 32,000.

The next largest contributor is Austria, which in 1891 furnished 71,000 new members of our community. Austria, too, has doubled her rate of contribution, sending us in 1882 only 32,000. Next come, side by side, in their offerings to our population, England and Ireland, each of which countries sends us about 50,000 new inhabitants every year, and has continued to do so for the last 15 years. Russia, exclusive of Poland, sent 47,000 in 1891, this being three times the number which she sent in 1882, a large increase. Sweden came next with 36,000 immigrants and that country shows a woeful falling-off of nearly one half in the ten years under consideration, for in the year 1882 it sent 64,000. Poland in 1891 sent us 27,000 immigrants, showing an enormous increase of nearly seven-fold over its contribution of 4,000 in 1882. Scotland and Norway and Denmark all send

about the same number, that is, about 12,000 each ; Norway showing a diminution in the decade ending 1891, from 29,000 in 1882, but the other two remaining about stationary. Switzerland in 1891 sent 6,000, a diminution from 10,000 in 1882. The Netherlands sent 5,000 in 1891, a decrease from 9,000 in 1882. France sent 6,000 and Belgium 3,000, these figures being about the same during all the years covered by our investigation. I have left out of the account the only other important factor in our immigration in the ten years considered, namely China, because the door was shut in its face with considerable emphasis in 1883, and the immigration from China to the Western States, which in 1882 amounted to 40,000, fell in 1883 to 8,000, and in 1884 to 279 individuals, and may, therefore, be neglected at the present time.

Now, an examination of the political institutions in the countries from which these immigrants come would show that in almost no case, that of Russia and Poland alone excepted, are the elements of representative government wholly unknown to the common people. In most of these countries, some form of popular government has, either wholly or partially, gained a footing, with the inevitable result of accustoming people more or less to representative institutions. Yet the short time that this has been the case in many of the countries which pour half or over of the total flood of immigration into the United States, and the long centuries of despotism which preceded this partial and recent enlightenment, make it painfully evident that there can be, in the large part of our immigrants, little knowledge of the republican form of government, and little inherited aptitude for such government. It would at first seem as if the results of such immigration must be disastrous to our country.

And yet the situation is not so hopeless. There is nothing mysterious, or even very complicated, about republican institutions. A little time, a little study, a little experience with the practical workings of elections, is sufficient to convey to any person of ordinary intelligence as much familiarity with these matters as is necessary for the intelligent appreciation of their objects and purposes. Nor is the material out of which the prospective citizen is to be made wholly unfitted for its purpose. To be sure, the Latin races, the Slavs, Hungarians, Poles, and others, have no inherited aptitude, nor, if we may judge from the his-



tory of the races, any inherent capacity for self-government and free institutions, but, as I have before said, in almost every case they have had in their own country a partial training in the forms of representative government. All that is needed is to amalgamate this heterogeneous mass, to fuse its elements in the heat and glow of our national life, until, formed in the mould of everyday experience, each one shall possess the characteristic features of what we believe to be the highest type of human development which the world has seen, the American citizen.

The process of acquiring American citizenship is regulated by acts of Congress. It is a simple process. Practically all that is required is a continuous residence of five years in the States, and one year in the special State in which citizenship is applied for, and the declaration of intention to become a citizen may be made immediately upon landing. This last point will be seen later to be very important.

Citizenship in the United States, however, under the act of Congress, does not carry with it the right to vote. This right is entirely a matter of State regulation, and the Constitution or statutes of each State settle who shall have the right to vote in its elections. The underlying idea of the whole system is universal male suffrage, and the franchise is granted (after a certain residence which will be discussed later), with only certain general limitations of obvious utility, such as that the voter must be twenty-one years of age, that he must not be an idiot or insane, and generally, that he must not have been convicted of any felony or infamous crime, although in many States a pardon, or the serving of a sentence, will restore a felon to his civil rights. In a few of the States paupers are also excluded from voting. With the question of woman suffrage we have nothing to do, as its settlement, one way or the other, does not affect the subject we are discussing.

The important qualification, however, in relation to the subjects which we are discussing, is that which requires residence in the State previous to the exercise of the franchise. And on this point the States may be divided into two great classes. One class allows no one to vote who is not, under the laws of Congress, a citizen of the United States, either native or naturalized. As we have seen that five years' residence is a requisite to United States citizenship, these States, therefore, require five years' resi-

dence as a prerequisite to acquiring the right to vote. These states are California, Connecticut, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington. This requirement is admirably calculated to secure that preliminary training in the practical working of our institutions which must be necessary to most of the immigrants before they can intelligently exercise the rights which are conferred upon them by American citizenship, and we cannot but admire the sagacity and judiciousness of those who framed our naturalization laws in selecting this period of time for the pupilage of the intending citizen. The period is long enough even for one who is engrossed in the cares of earning a support for himself and his family, amid all the excitement and novelty of a changed residence, to acquire in the five succeeding annual elections a sufficient knowledge of republican government for all practical purposes. To delay him longer in the exercise of his political rights would be an injustice; to admit him to them sooner would be an imprudence.

There is, however, a class of States which, departing from the wisdom of the federal statutes, have marked out for themselves another line of conduct which cannot be too deeply deplored. Many of the States, whose names will be given hereafter, have considered that the declaration of the intention to become a citizen, which is a preliminary, as we have seen, to naturalization, is in itself, or combined with a very short term of residence in the State, sufficient to entitle the person to the exercise of the franchise. In Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Indiana, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, North Dakota, Texas, and Wisconsin, one year's residence in the State, combined with the declaration required by the United States laws of the intent to become a citizen, is the time limit to qualify a voter. In Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, and Oregon, only six months' residence in the State is required. Either of these periods is much too short for the educational purposes necessary to fit the applicant for the duties of citizenship. Amid the excitement and turmoil necessarily attending a change of residence and country, immersed as he would be in starting his business, or in getting his farm under cultivation, it would be impossible for him to give

any proper attention to political matters in one year, and still less would this be possible in six months. To allow the right to vote on the expiration of so short a residence, is to invite into the polling booth a class of voters whose presence cannot fail to strengthen the hands of political bosses, to render intelligent administration of the government more difficult, and to open a wide field for corruption.

There are in a few states other qualifications required of a voter. The most important of these is the educational qualification, which exists only in Connecticut and Massachusetts. In neither of these is it very severe. In Connecticut the voter must be able to read any article in the State constitution, and any section of the statutes. In Massachusetts he must be able to read the Constitution and to write his name. Too much praise can hardly be given to these requirements. The whole edifice of our national life is founded upon education, and to this potent factor must we look for many of the improvements necessary to the proper development of our national life.

In quite a number of States a pecuniary qualification exists in the shape of the payment of some tax, generally a poll tax, within two years previous to the date of the election. This requirement does not seem to be so germane to the spirit of our institutions as the other. The great present danger of our country is the danger of becoming a plutocracy, and while there is no doubt that a widespread interest in property develops stability of institutions, yet there is also great danger of capital obtaining so firm and strong a hold upon political institutions as to crush out the life of free government and to convert the national government into a species of close corporation, in which the relative wealth of the parties alone controls. This qualification is found in Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, Nevada, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Texas.

We have now examined with some thoroughness the component parts of the tide of immigration as it arrives at our shores; we have seen what nationalities go to make up the grand total, and what previous training they have had in the political institutions of their native countries to fit them for American citizenship, and what additional requirements are imposed upon them by our statutes before they can participate in voting and government in this country. What are the conclusions to which the

view of these facts brings us ? They seem to me to be these : first, that the growth of immigration is a desirable thing for this country ; second, that the immigrants who arrive at our shores are for the most part good material out of which to make American citizens, if they are properly trained ; third, that the two conspicuous defects in these immigrants are lack of general education and lack of special training in free political institutions. Applying these conclusions to the questions which were stated at the outset of this article ; first, is it for the advantage of the United States that immigration should be checked or limited ? second, if so, in what way should the check or limit be applied ? the answer would be that no check or limit should be applied to the immigration of *bona fide* laborers, but that a check should be placed upon the exercise of the franchise by immigrants in all States by requiring a residence of five years in this country before they can vote, and by also requiring some moderate educational test.

With these safeguards established we might look without any serious apprehension upon the increase of our population. The founders of our state moulded the outlines of its form in large and noble lines. The skeleton has grown and clothed itself with flesh with almost incredible rapidity in the hundred years of its existence. But it is still young. We should avoid any measures which would stunt or deform its growth and should allow it to develop freely and generously till the full-grown American nation stands forth pre-eminent among the nations of the earth, in size, as well as in character and organization, and man's last experiment in government is clearly seen to be an unequivocal success.

SIMON GREENLEAF CROSWELL.